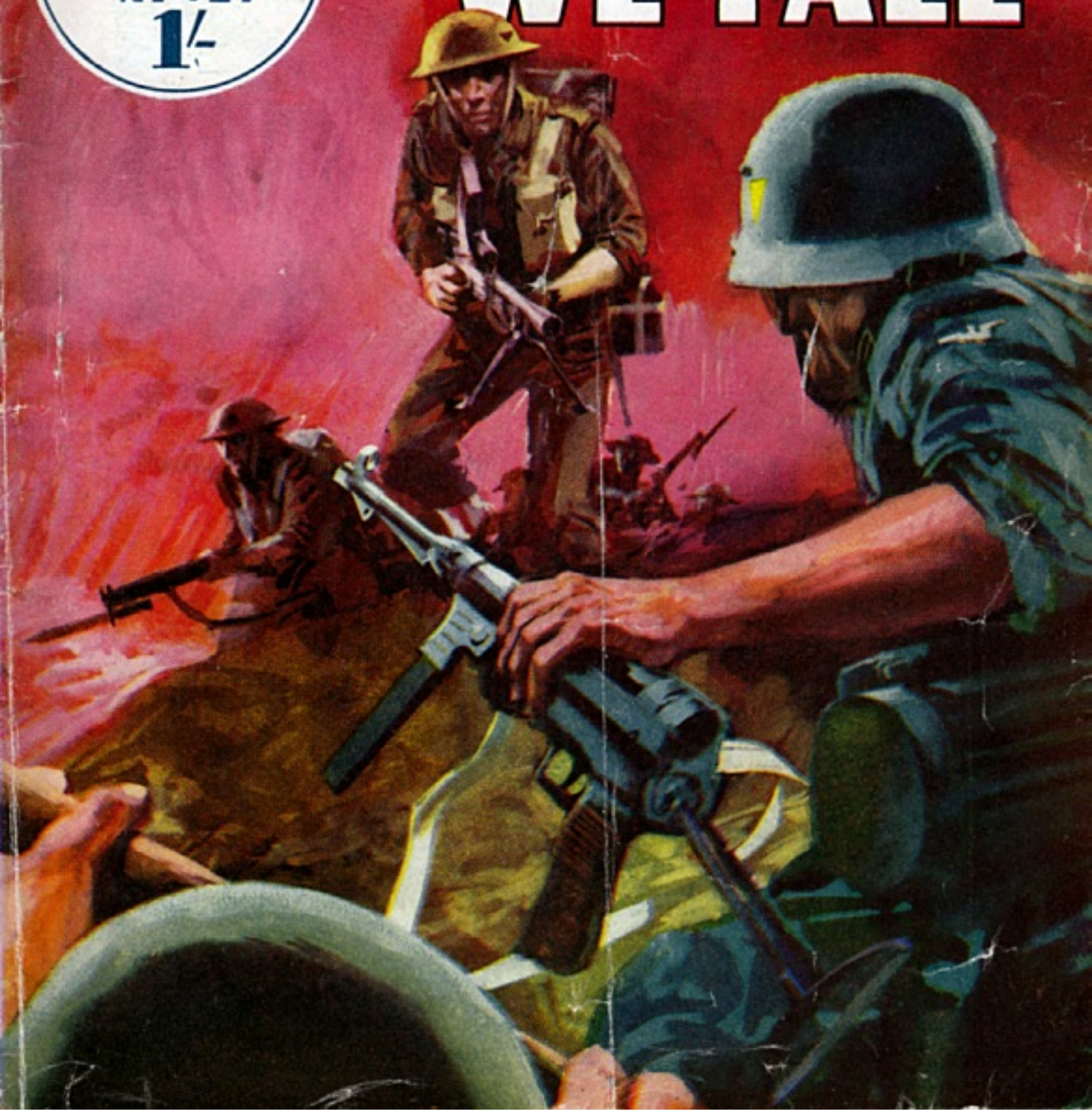


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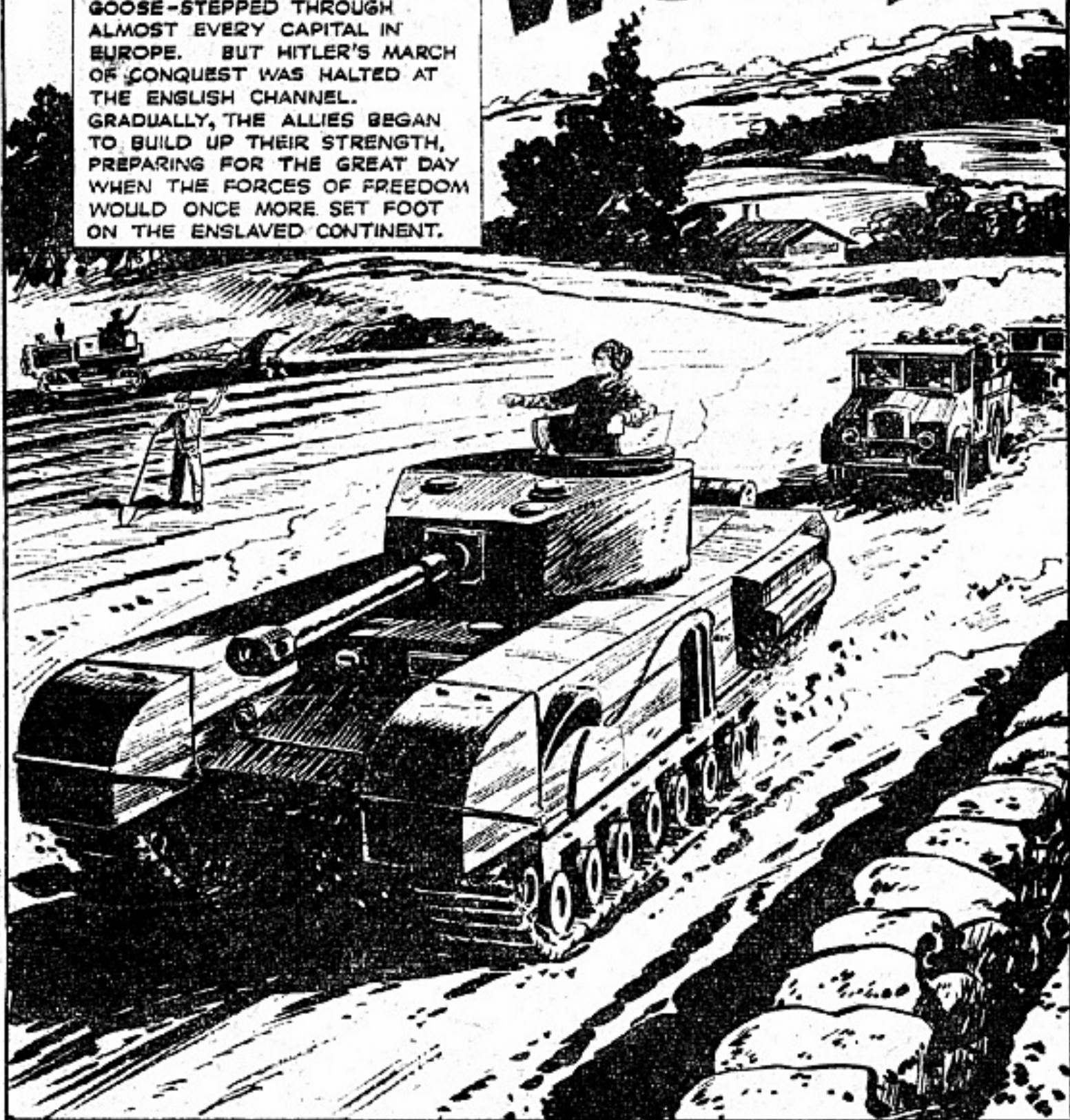


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Divided We Fall

THE JACKBOOTED ARMIES OF HITLER'S THIRD REICH HAD GOOSE-STEPPED THROUGH ALMOST EVERY CAPITAL IN EUROPE. BUT HITLER'S MARCH OF CONQUEST WAS HALTED AT THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. GRADUALLY, THE ALLIES BEGAN TO BUILD UP THEIR STRENGTH, PREPARING FOR THE GREAT DAY WHEN THE FORCES OF FREEDOM WOULD ONCE MORE SET FOOT ON THE ENSLAVED CONTINENT.



Chapter 1. The FIGHTING FARMERS

TWO MEN WHO WERE TO PLAY A PART IN THE LAUNCHING OF THIS MIGHTY INVASION WERE THE HARD-WORKING SONS OF NEIGHBOURING FARMERS. THEY LIVED AND WORKED IN THE DERBYSHIRE HILLS AROUND THE VILLAGE OF HATHERMOOR, AND ALTHOUGH RIVALS RATHER THAN FRIENDS, THEY OFTEN FOUND THEMSELVES IN EACH OTHER'S COMPANY.

NO ONE'S YET CLIMBED EDALE TOP IN FEBRUARY... AND NO ONE WILL, YOU MARK MY WORDS! APART FROM THE WEATHER, T'AIN'T DAYLIGHT FOR LONG ENOUGH!

THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME!

I SAY IT CAN BE DONE...EASILY!

WHenever there was any sort of argument, it was always Dan Evans and Peter Falk who stood defiantly against the older men's knowledge and wisdom...NOT BECAUSE THEY WISHED TO AGREE WITH EACH OTHER, BUT BECAUSE THEY BOTH WISHED TO DISAGREE WITH EVERYONE ELSE!

YOU SAY IT CAN BE DONE... DO IT, THEN!

RIGHT... I WILL!

AND SO WILL I... STARTING AT DAWN TOMORROW!

NEXT MORNING, THE TWO YOUNG MEN WHO HAD CLIMBED EDALE TOP MANY TIMES IN THE LONG SUMMER DAYS, SET OFF FOR THE SAME TRICKY ASCENT IN THE FEBRUARY SLEET AND RAIN...



THE FIRST PART OF THE CLIMB WAS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND THEY MADE GOOD TIME.

HOW ARE THEY GOING, GEORGE?

FINE! THEY'LL DO IT IF THEY KEEP GOING AS THEY ARE!

I BET THEY'RE ARGUING WITH EACH OTHER EVERY INCH OF THE WAY. RIGHT CANTANKEROUS, THOSE LADS!

THE OLD LOCAL KNEW HIS MEN SURE ENOUGH. THE BIGGEST ARGUMENT BEGAN WHEN THEY REACHED THE OVERHANG ROCK.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? I ALWAYS GO ROUND TO THE RIGHT! IT'S A BETTER CLIMB AND THE ROCKS ARE FIRMER!

WHAT'S THE USE OF THAT? THE OTHER WAY'S QUICKER AND I KNOW THESE ROCKS LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND!

EACH HAD HIS SEPARATE WAY AROUND THE OVERHANG AND NEITHER WOULD TAKE THE ROUTE RECOMMENDED BY THE OTHER.



BUT WINTER CLIMBING WAS A TREACHEROUS SPORT, AND PETER SOON FOUND HIMSELF IN DIFFICULTIES. AT GREAT COST TO HIS PRIDE, HE CALLED ON DAN FOR HELP.

THE FACE IS CRUMBLING... I'VE GOT NO FOOT HOLD!

HOLD ON... I'M COMING!

DAN HELPED WILLINGLY ENOUGH, BUT LOST NO TIME IN REMINDING PETER THAT HE HAD 'TOLD HIM SO'!

I DON'T LIKE THIS WAY, BUT WE'VE GOT NO TIME TO TURN BACK AND USE THE OTHER!

THANKS FOR THE LEG-UP, DAN! I THINK WE CAN STILL DO IT... THE REST LOOKS FAIRLY FIRM!

DAN EVANS HAD 'WON A VICTORY'
AND IN HIS HOUR OF 'GLORY' HE
TOOK THE LEAD...

DON'T USE THAT
HAND HOLD, DAN!
THAT ROCK WAS
LOOSE LAST
SUMMER!

YOU'RE A
FINE ONE TO TALK!
I GET YOU OUT OF A
MESS—THEN, FIVE
MINUTES LATER, YOU'RE
TELLING ME WHAT
TO DO!

AS OBSTINATE AS A DEAF
DONKEY, EVANS GRASPED THE
ROCK...AND INSTANTLY KNEW
HIMSELF FOR A FOOL.

AAGH!

THAT'S DONE IT. NOW WE'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER ROUTE AND THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT BEFORE DARK!



ALTHOUGH THE TWO YOUNG MEN WERE AS OBSTINATE AS EACH OTHER, THEY WERE NOT FOOLS ENOUGH TO RISK SPENDING A WINTER'S NIGHT OUT ON A MOUNTAIN!

DEFEATED, THEY BEGAN THE LONG CLIMB BACK DOWN INTO THE DALE. EACH WAS WRAPPED IN HIS OWN GLUM THOUGHTS... WHICH WERE FAR FROM BEING DIFFERENT.

I'M NOT GOING INTO THAT PUB TONIGHT... TO TELL 'EM THAT I WAS WRONG AND THEY WERE RIGHT! I BET PETER WON'T, NEITHER!



WE'LL BE LAUGHING STOCKS WHEN I TELL THOSE OLD FOOLS THAT I CAN BRAG BETTER THAN I CAN CLIMB! I WONDER...

NEXT MORNING, THE TWO YOUNG FARMERS CAUGHT THE MILK TRAIN TO THE NEAREST TOWN. SHAMEFACED, THEY HAD MUTUALLY AGREED TO HIDE THEIR EMBARRASSMENT IN THE RANKS OF BRITAIN'S ARMY WHICH WAS PREPARING HARD FOR THE COMING LIBERATION OF EUROPE.



NEXT MORNING, DAN EVANS AND PETER FALK WERE MILES AWAY FROM HATHERMOOR, BEING THE FIRST TWO MEN TO REPORT AT THE NEAREST TOWN'S RECRUITING OFFICE.

AHA! FIRST IN,
FIRST SERVED!
THE ARMY CAN DO
WITH EAGER LADS
LIKE YOU! COME IN,
COME IN! WHAT
ARE YOUR NAMES?



WITHIN A FEW HOURS, THEY WERE FINDING THEIR FEET WITH OTHER RECRUITS IN A TRAINING DEPOT. THERE, IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE THEY WERE AT LOGGERHEADS ONCE MORE!

THIS IS MY
BUNK! SO YOU CAN
TAKE YOUR CASE
OFF IT!

YOU CAN GO
AND RUN ROUND
THE BLOCK!

ARK AT
THE SWEDE
BASHERS!



Divided We Fall

NEITHER OF THE OBSTINATE PAIR WOULD GIVE UP HIS CLAIM. THERE WAS NO TELLING HOW THE DISPUTE WOULD HAVE ENDED, WHEN A THIRD PARTY TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION.



BUT THE IRISHMAN WAS NO MATCH FOR THE TWO EX-FARMERS, WHO INSTANTLY PAIRED UP ON HIM.



A COMBINED HEAVE, AND THE BURLY INTRUDER SOARED INTO THE AIR...



WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING ON HERE?

THE R.S.M.!

AAAOW!

CORPORAL — SEE THOSE TWO GET PLENTY TO DO! THEY'VE GOT TOO MUCH ENERGY!



AND SO IT WENT ON. AT THE LEAST EXCUSE THEY WOULD HAVE AN ARGUMENT, THEN COMPETE AGAINST EACH OTHER IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO PROVE WHO WAS RIGHT.

COME ON, YOU FLAT-FOOTED OLD WOMEN, ONLY ANOTHER TWO MILES!

MY FEET ARE KILLING ME!

FEELING TIRED, EVANS?



NOT ME! I'M FIT FOR ANOTHER TWENTY MILES!

IT SOON BECAME OBVIOUS TO THE ARMY THAT THIS RIVALRY COULD BE PUT TO GOOD USE...

THOSE TWO FELLERS, EVANS AND FALK, LOOK DARN FIT, MISTER WHITE.

IT'S THIS FEUD OF THEIRS THAT DOES IT, SIR. NEITHER ONE WILL GIVE IN WHILE THE OTHER'S STILL ON HIS FEET!

THOSE CHAPS HAVE BEEN DIGGING THOSE AIR-RAID TRENCHES FOR A WEEK NOW! THEY'RE NOWHERE NEAR FINISHED!

NO, SIR! BUT I'VE GOT AN IDEA, SIR!

THE FIRST STEP IN THE REGIMENTAL SERGEANT-MAJOR'S PLAN WAS TO SUMMON FALK AND EVANS TO HIS OFFICE AFTER FIRST PARADE NEXT MORNING.

FALK—EVANS! YOU ARE NOW PROMOTED TO LANCE-CORPORALS! PUT YOUR TAPES ON! I'M PUTTING EACH OF YOU IN CHARGE OF A WORKING PARTY!

PROMOTION ALREADY!

THERE'S A CATCH IN THIS!

THE PLAN WORKED WELL...

PUT YOUR BACKS INTO IT, YOU NO-GOOD LAYABOUTS! EVANS' BOYS ARE A YARD AHEAD OF US!

GOOD WORK, MISTER WHITE. A NICE PIECE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY!



THE PLAN WAS GOOD BUT IT DID NOT LAST LONG BECAUSE THE NEXT DAY ALL RANKS WERE PARADED TO HEAR A COMMANDO OFFICER ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR HIS UNIT.

....SO YOU SEE, WE WANT CHAPS WHO ARE MORE THAN "TOUGH." FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY ABOUT ONE IN TEN OF YOU WOULD SURVIVE THE COMMANDO TRAINING COURSE—FOR IT'S PLANNED TO BREAK ANYONE WHO ISN'T COMMANDO MATERIAL!



THAT AFTERNOON, THE LEADERS OF THE TRENCH-DIGGING FATIGUE WERE NOT ON PARADE.

HEY, YOU! WHERE IN THE NAME OF THUNDER ARE LANCE CORPORALS FALK AND EVANS?

THEY'VE GONE TO JOIN THE COMMANDOS, SIR.

THE COMMANDO TRAINEES HAD BEEN TRAVELLING OVERNIGHT FROM LONDON. THEY WERE TIRED AND HUNGRY AND WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO A CUP OF TEA AND BREAKFAST. THE SCOTTISH HILLS LOOKED BLEAK AND UNPROMISING. THE WELCOMING N.C.O.'S LOOKED HEARTLESSLY CHEERFUL AND ENERGETIC.

OUT YOU JUMP! AT THE DOUBLE NOW! LOOK LIVELY!

COME ON—GET FELL IN!

THEY'RE A BRIGHT CHEERY COUPLE! WHERE'S THE TRANSPORT?

THERE WAS NO TRANSPORT. THE INTRODUCTION TO COMMANDO TRAINING CONSISTED OF A FAST, FOUR-MILE MARCH WITH ALL THEIR KIT, FROM THE RAILWAY STATION TO THE CAMP...



THE NEW COURSE ARRIVED AT THE CAMP EXHAUSTED AND IN VERY LOW SPIRITS. BUT THAT WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING....



COLD RAIN LASHED DOWN OUT OF THE FROZEN HILLS, AS THE RED-EYED AND WEARY RECRUITS DID P.T.

AND THERE'S A NICE LONG WALK IF YOU FINISH YOUR P.T. LIKE GOOD LITTLE BOYS!

A WALK, HE SAYS?

A LONG WALK! THAT SHOULD FINISH FRIEND EVANS!

THAT'LL BREAK FALK'S HEART!

PITILESSLY, THE PRESSURE WAS KEPT UP...

— HURRY UP THERE! AT THE DOUBLE!

THE PACE WAS BRISK AND THE GROUND GOT ROUGHER WITH EACH MILE — AND THEN THEY SAW THE CORPORAL'S OBJECTIVE...

RIGHT, THIS IS WHERE WE LEAVE THE ROAD! WE'RE GOING TO DO SOME ROCK CLIMBING!

WELL, YOU CAN 'AVE IT, CHUM! YOU CAN 'AVE SCOTLAND — THE COMMANDOS — AND YER BLOOMIN' MOUNTAINEERING!

COME ON, FRED. DON'T LET HIM GET YOU DOWN!

LEAVING FRED SITTING ON A BOULDER, NURSING HIS SORE FEET, THEY PLODDED THROUGH THE THICK TUSsocks OF SNOW-COVERED HEATHER. A FEW HUNDRED FEET ABOVE THEM, A BLACK CLIFF ROSE UP INTO THE MIST...



SOON, THE MEN WERE BEGINNING TO FEEL THE NUMBNESS OF EXHAUSTION. THE CLIFF WAS NOT SO STEEP AS IT LOOKED—BUT IT WENT UP—AND UP—AND UP...



THE NEXT MINUTE, THE HEAVY NOTE OF A BREN GUN DRUMMED UP FROM THE VALLEY. BULLETS WHINED AND RICOCHETTED. BEWILDERED MEN CLUNG TO THE ROCKS!

KEEP GOING AND DON'T PANIC! THIS IS WHAT YOU'LL HAVE TO GET USED TO!



IN THE PRECARIOUS SAFETY OF THE MISTY MOUNTAIN TOP, THE PLATOON AT LAST REFORMED. EVERYONE WAS READY TO DROP DOWN IN THE SNOW AND SLEEP — SLEEP — SLEEP. . . .

WELL DONE! FIVE MINUTES REST AND THEN BACK TO CAMP!

WHAT IF SOMEONE HAD BEEN HIT BY THOSE BULLETS, CORPORAL?

YOU CAN'T MAKE OMELETTES WITHOUT BREAKING EGGS, LADDIE! BUT DON'T WORRY — WE DON'T HAVE MANY CASUALTIES!



THREE HOURS LATER, THE EXHAUSTED PLATOON STRAGGLED BACK TO CAMP... TO CRAWL WEARILY INTO THEIR BUNKS.

HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE WALK, LADS— SLEEP WELL!



BUT A MERE TWO HOURS LATER....

EMERGENCY!
WAKY
WAKY!

COME ON,
OUT OF BED! AT
THE DOUBLE!

WHA-
WHA-
WHAT!

IS-EMERGENCY?



WITHIN MINUTES, THE MEN WERE OUT OF THE HUT AND ON THE MOVE... A SQUAD OF STUMBLING SLEEP-WALKERS, SHEPHERDED BY THE PITILESS N.C.O.'S.

COME ON,
YOU DOZY LOT!
PICK YOUR FEET
UP!



THE PLATOON SHUFFLED TO A WEARY HALT AT THE SIDE OF A LOCH. IT WAS ONLY THEN THAT THE TERRIBLE PURPOSE OF THE NIGHT EXERCISE WAS MADE CLEAR.

OKAY! FIRST
MAN TO SWIM THE
LOCH CAN GO BACK
TO BED!

SWIM IN
THAT LOT?
NOT LIKELY!

I'M
PACKING
IT IN.



STILL NUMBED WITH FATIGUE, THE WILLING ONES TOOK TO THE WATER, ALTHOUGH IT WAS NO GREAT DISTANCE, IT SEEMED TO THE SWIMMERS THAT THE FAR BANK WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD...



THE SMILING INSTRUCTORS AWAITED THE SWIMMERS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE LOCH...



SIX WEEKS LATER, THE COMMANDO TRAINING COURSE CAME TO AN END. A HANDFUL OF MEN REMAINED OF THE ORIGINAL PLATOON—AMONG THEM WERE MEN WHO HAD PROVED THEY POSSESSED THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF ENDURANCE, RUGGED STRENGTH AND COURAGE.



Chapter 2. *Tough Assignment*

JUNE 1944. DAN AND PETER—NOW LIEUTENANTS—WERE BECOMING BORED TO DEATH WITH THE INTERMINABLE MANOEUVRES WHICH PRECEDED THE DIVISION. THEN CAME AN ORDER TO REPORT TO A LONDON ADDRESS.

EVERYWHERE
I GO, YOU
FOLLOW ME!

YOU
FOLLOW ME,
YOU MEAN! ANYWAY,
WHERE DO YOU THINK
WE'RE GOING? THE
ADDRESS ON THE
WARRANT IS BAKER
STREET!




A TAXI CARRIED THEM TO THEIR DESTINATION. THERE DAN LOOKED AT THE TRAVEL WARRANT IN SURPRISE...

IT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT A CIRCUS. THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT ODD HERE!

WELL, THE BEST THING IS TO GO IN AND ASK!


WITHIN A FEW MINUTES OF WALKING THROUGH A DOORWAY, THEY WERE TALKING TO A COLONEL.

THIS IS A SPECIAL SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, GENTLEMEN. WE URGENTLY REQUIRE TWO MEN WHO ARE USED TO FINDING THEIR WAY ABOUT THE COUNTRY AT NIGHT. FROM REPORTS I'VE SEEN, YOU TWO SEEM TO FIT THE BILL.



IN A FEW DAYS' TIME, THE ALLIES ARE GOING TO INVADE FRANCE. THE ENEMY IS EXPECTING THE INVASION, OF COURSE, BUT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHERE WE SHALL LAND. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS ONE WHOLE PANZER DIVISION STATIONED TOO NEAR OUR INVASION COAST FOR COMFORT. THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN, GENTLEMEN.

THE PANZER DIVISION WAS LYING UP IN THE WOODED ACRES OF AN OLD CHATEAU. IT WAS VITAL THAT THIS FORCE SHOULD BE EITHER DIVERTED ELSEWHERE OR PUT OUT OF ACTION TO PREVENT THEM RACING TO PLUG ANY GAP IN HITLER'S ATLANTIC WALL...



BUT, SIR— WHY DON'T YOU SEND A COUPLE OF HUNDRED LANCASTERS TO BOMB THEM?

BECAUSE THE GERMANS EXPECT US ON ANOTHER PART OF THE FRENCH COAST AND WE DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO ROUSE ANY OTHER SUSPICION! THAT IS WHY YOU WILL BE OPERATING AS A SMALL FORCE.

THE PLAN WHICH THE COLONEL THEN OUTLINED WAS ENOUGH TO STARTLE EVEN THE MOST HARDENED COMMANDO....

WE PROPOSE TO LAND YOU HERE WITH TWO JEEPS AND FOUR MEN. EACH OF YOU WILL TAKE A JEEP AND CONTACT A BAND OF THE LOCAL MAQUIS. IT'LL BE UP TO YOU TO LEARN ALL YOU CAN FROM THEM, THEN IN THE LIGHT OF EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU MUST DECIDE UPON A PLAN TO IMMOBILISE THE DIVISION.

THERE IS ONE EXTRA SNAG! THERE IS A LOT OF LOCAL RIVALRY BETWEEN THE BANDS OF MAQUIS WITH WHOM YOU'LL HAVE TO CO-OPERATE! YOU CHAPS WILL HAVE TO GET THEM WORKING TOGETHER.

THE REMAINDER OF THAT DAY WAS SPENT IN STUDYING THE AREA AND DISCUSSING THE PLAN IN DETAIL. THE NEXT EVENING, THEY WERE TAKEN TO AN AIRFIELD.

HERE ARE THE MEN WHO ARE GOING WITH YOU! CORPORAL WILSON, PRIVATE MACFEE, CORPORAL GREGSON AND LANCE CORPORAL FEN!

WHILE DAN AND PETER SUPERVISED THE PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR LANDING, THE TWO RIVAL MAQUIS LEADERS WERE BEING FORCED TO CO-OPERATE BY A DIRECT ORDER FROM THE FREE FRENCH H.Q. IN LONDON.

M'SIEUR LESOIS, IT APPEARS THAT WE MUST PREPARE A LANDING FOR SOME ENGLISHMEN TONIGHT. IT WILL BE ON YOUR GROUND, I UNDERSTAND.

OUI — ON MY GROUND! IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY FOR YOU TO BE THERE, M'SIEUR BERAND!

OH, BUT WE INSIST, M'SIEUR LESOIS!

THAT NIGHT THE TWO BANDS OF MAQUIS WAITED TO SIGNAL THE DAKOTA IN TO LAND.

THE BOCHES ARE RESTLESS TONIGHT! IT IS NOT A GOOD NIGHT FOR THIS LANDING!

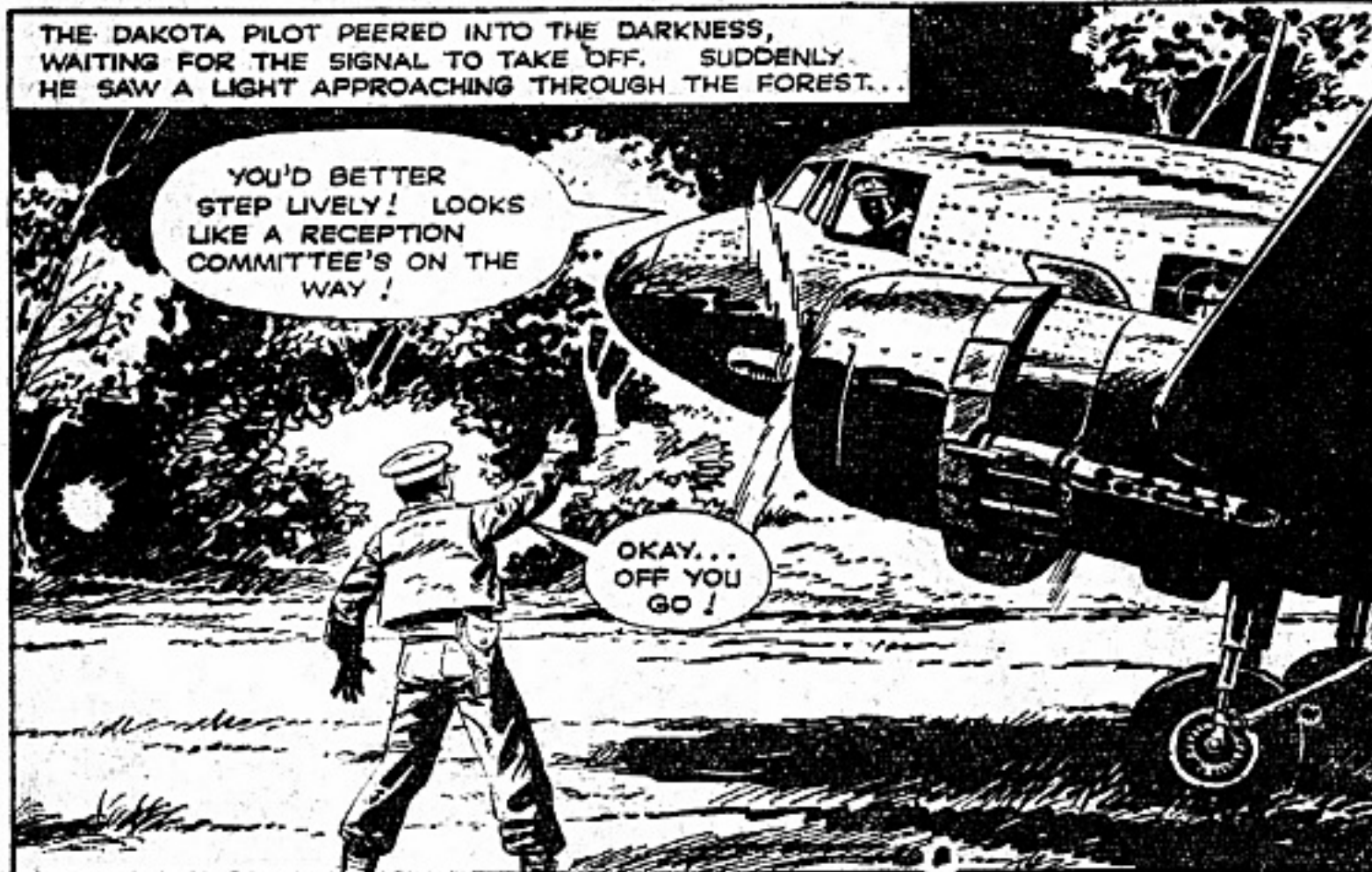
HA! — HERE COMES THE AEROPLANE!



IT TOOK A GREAT DEAL OF SKILL, BUT THE PILOT MANAGED TO BRING THE DAKOTA ROLLING SAFELY TO THE END OF THE NARROW LANDING STRIP...



THE DAKOTA PILOT PEERED INTO THE DARKNESS, WAITING FOR THE SIGNAL TO TAKE OFF. SUDDENLY, HE SAW A LIGHT APPROACHING THROUGH THE FOREST...

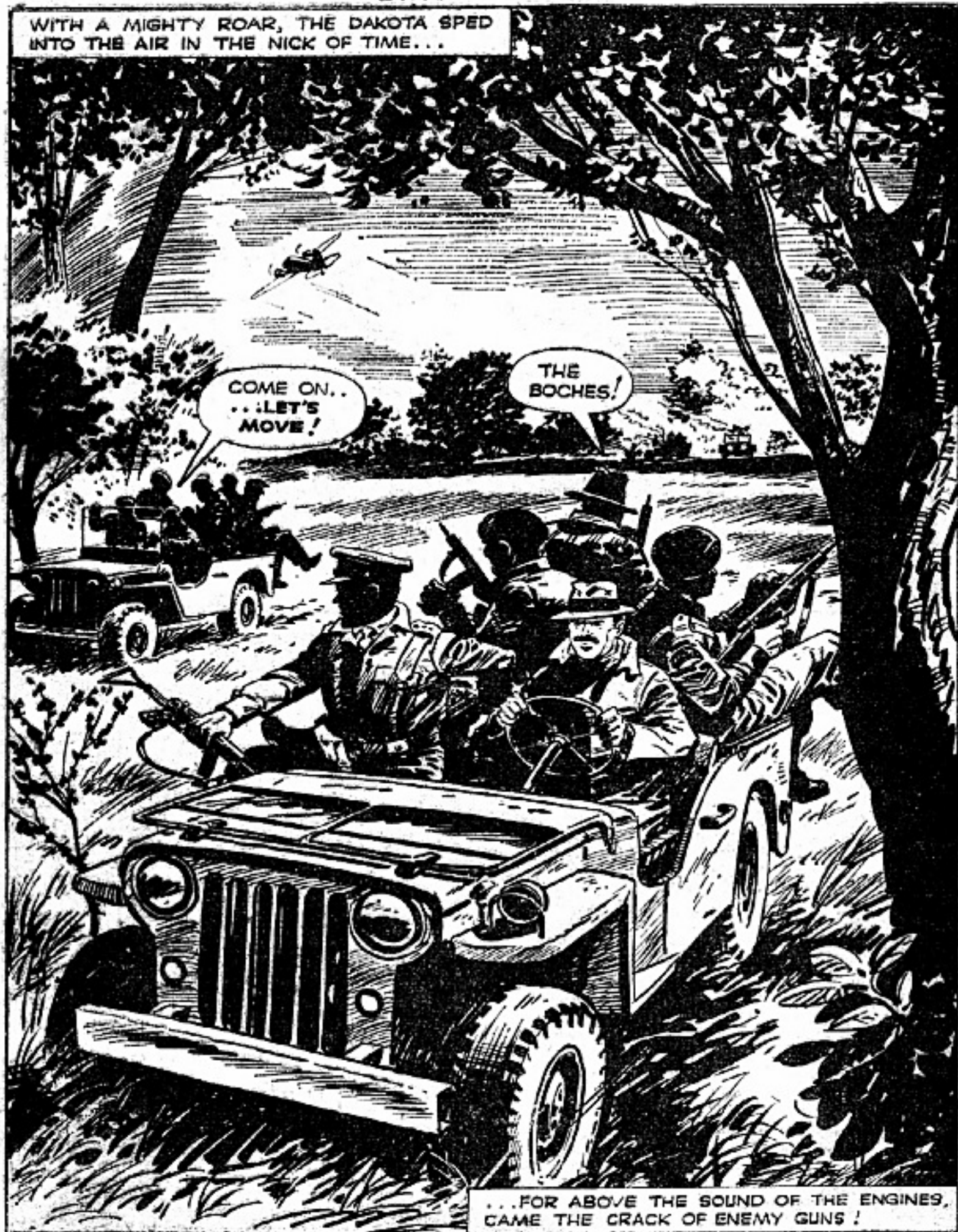


WITH A MIGHTY ROAR, THE DAKOTA SPED
INTO THE AIR IN THE NICK OF TIME...

COME ON..
...LET'S
MOVE!

THE
BOCHES!

...FOR ABOVE THE SOUND OF THE ENGINES,
CAME THE CRACK OF ENEMY GUNS!



THE TWO JEEPS RACED FOR
THE SHELTER OF THE TREES...

WE MUST
SPLIT UP!


RIGHT!
NOW'S AS GOOD
A TIME AS
ANY!

ONCE IN THE WOODS, THE TWO JEEPS
TURNED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS...

DON'T WORRY,
PETER! SEE YOU
LATER!


WHO'S WORRIED?
WE CAN TAKE CARE
OF OURSELVES!

SUCCESSFULLY SHAKING OFF PURSUIT, LOUIS BERAND DROVE PETER, MACFEE AND JEREMY GREGSON FURIOUSLY ACROSS COUNTRY TO HIS HEADQUARTERS.



HERE, MES AMIS, IS OUR HIDEOUT — DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS. M^SIEUR LESOIS IS A FOOL IN MANY WAYS — BUT HE KNOWS THE COUNTRY WELL. THE BOCHE WON'T CATCH HIM!


THEN, PETER EXPLAINED THE OBJECT OF THE MISSION TO LOUIS...



BON, BON! IT CAN BE DONE. THE BOCHES ARE VERY—HOW YOU SAY—UNEASY. THEY THINK THAT YOU WILL SOON OPEN YOUR SECOND FRONT. IT WOULD TAKE LITTLE TO PROVIDE A PANIC!

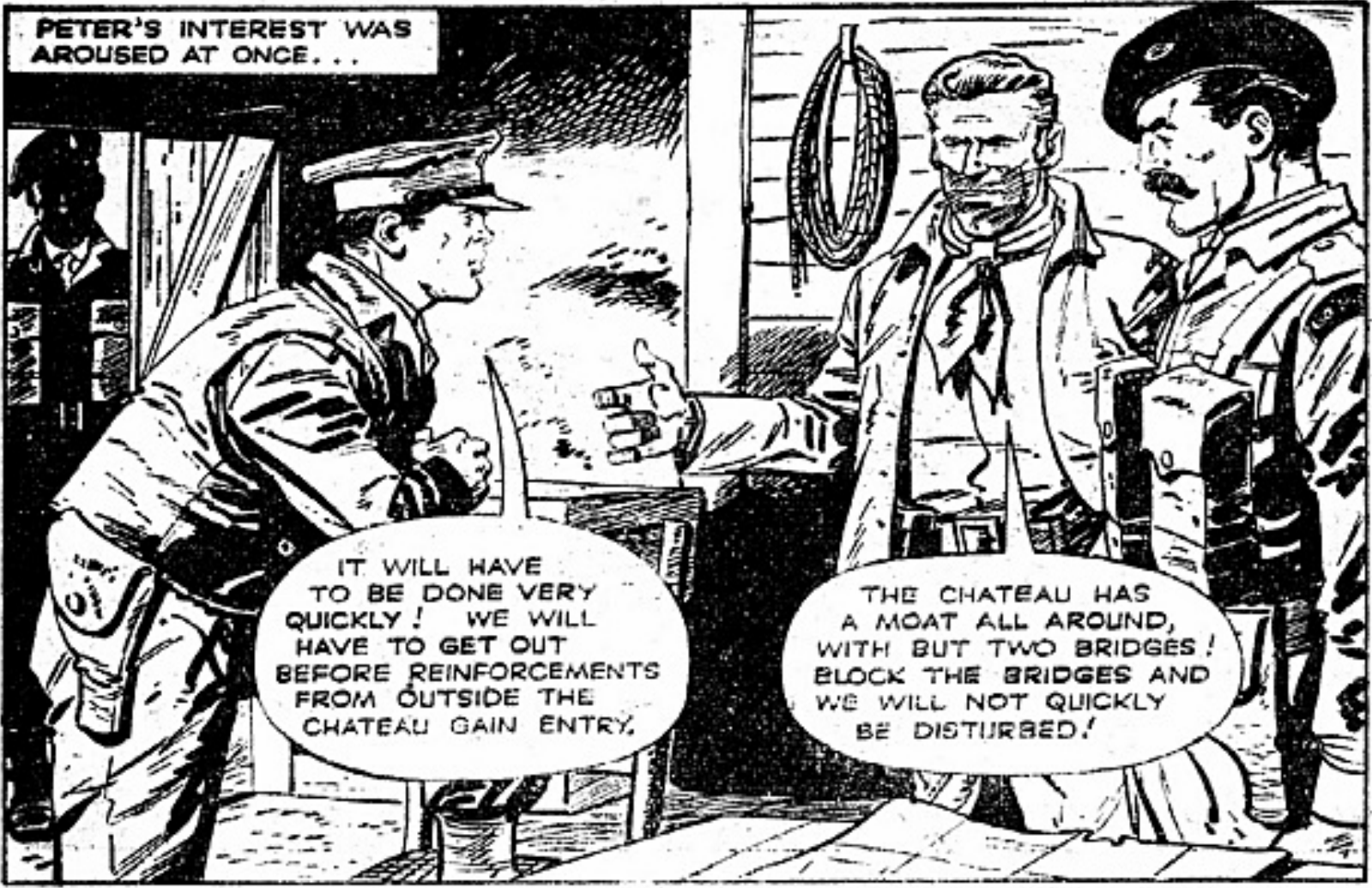
BUT THE QUESTION IS—HOW WE CAN BEST PRODUCE A PANIC?

LOUIS SUGGESTED AN
IDEA TO PETER.



HERE IS AN OLD
AND LONG-FORGOTTEN
PASSAGE LEADING INTO
THE CHATEAU, IN WHICH
LIVE ALL THE PANZER
OFFICERS AND SERGEANTS.
DESTROY THESE MEN...
AND THE DIVISION WILL
BE PUT OUT OF ACTION
FOR MANY WEEKS.

PETER'S INTEREST WAS
AROUSED AT ONCE...



IT WILL HAVE
TO BE DONE VERY
QUICKLY! WE WILL
HAVE TO GET OUT
BEFORE REINFORCEMENTS
FROM OUTSIDE THE
CHATEAU GAIN ENTRY.

THE CHATEAU HAS
A MOAT ALL AROUND,
WITH BUT TWO BRIDGES!
BLOCK THE BRIDGES!
WE WILL NOT QUICKLY
BE DISTURBED!

IN THE MEANTIME, DAN AND HIS MEN HAD BEEN CONDUCTED TO SAFETY BY JACQUES LESOIS... AND WERE DISCUSSING A PLAN OF ACTION.



ONE THING, GENTLEMEN—I CANNOT FIGHT UNDER LOUIS BERAND. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

M'SIEUR LESOIS—YOU WILL TAKE YOUR ORDERS FROM ME!

JACQUES LESOIS, WHEN INFORMED OF THE PURPOSE OF THE EXPEDITION, HAD NO HELPFUL SUGGESTION TO MAKE!

IT IS NOT PRACTICABLE, M'SIEUR EVANS. THERE ARE MANY HUNDREDS OF THE BOCHES. TELL YOUR COMMANDER TO SEND BOMBERS!

NO, WE CAN'T DO THAT! WELL... I'D BETTER GO AND HAVE A LOOK FOR MYSELF!



WITH A MAP AND COMPASS, DAN AND THE TWO CORPORALS SLIPPED OFF INTO THE DAWN TO MAKE A RECONNAISSANCE...



I'M GOING UP THIS TREE FOR A LOOK AROUND!

DON'T BE LONG, SIR. WE DON'T WANT TO TANGLE WITH A TIGER TANK!

DAN WAS NEARER TO THE CHATEAU THAN HE THOUGHT...



GREAT SCOTT!
JACQUES IS RIGHT,
WE CAN'T DESTROY
THAT LOT! OR CAN
WE? I THINK!
SEE HOW WE
MIGHT.

ONCE BACK AT JACQUES' HEADQUARTERS,
DAN ACTED...



AN HOUR LATER, THE RUNNER HAD
PRESENTED PETER WITH DAN'S
PEREMPTORY ORDERS...



Chapter 3.

CAPTURED

MEANWHILE, THE PANZER COMMANDANT HAD BEEN IN A STATE OF AGITATION EVER SINCE IT HAD BEEN REPORTED THAT A BRITISH PLANE HAD LANDED TROOPS IN THE VICINITY.



LEAVING THE ANGRY GENERAL, THE GERMAN MAJOR LOOKED FOR A SCAPEGOAT...



WHILE PETER WAS SNATCHING SOME SLEEP,
ANOTHER RUNNER ENTERED LOUIS' HEADQUARTERS...

M'SIEUR BERAND !
THIS IS A PRIORITY
MESSAGE FROM LONDON
FOR THE ENGLISHMEN !
IT IS IN CODE !

IN CODE ?
THEN I MUST
WAKE HIM !

THE MESSAGE WHEN DECODED
WAS SIMPLE AND DIRECT ! THE
INVASION WAS TO TAKE PLACE
AT DAWN THE NEXT DAY ! THAT
MEANT THE PANZER DIVISION
WOULD HAVE TO BE IMMOBILISED
THAT NIGHT !

WE MUST
HURRY THINGS
UP ! SEND A MAN
AT ONCE TO TELL
LIEUTENANT EVANS !
I MUST SEE
HIM !

IMMEDIATELY,
M'SIEUR !

AN HOUR LATER, DAN REACHED
BERAND'S HIDEOUT. . . .

I'VE JUST RECEIVED
A MESSAGE! THE BIG
SHOW'S PLANNED FOR
TOMORROW MORNING!

THAT MEANS
WE HAVE TO ACT
TONIGHT!

DAN LISTENED WITH
ILL-CONCEALED
IMPATIENCE AS PETER
PUT FORWARD HIS
PLAN. . . .

. . . SO YOU
SEE, WHEN WE PUT
THE OFFICERS AND N.C.O'S
OUT OF ACTION, THE
WHOLE DIVISION WILL BE
WITHOUT LEADERS!

LOOK, FALK,
THERE'S NO TIME
TO ARGUE, BUT I CAN
SEE YOUR PLAN WON'T
WORK! YOU'D
BETTER LISTEN TO
MY PLAN!

Divided We Fall

BUT PETER FALK SAW RED!

NO, YOU LISTEN TO ME, DAN! WE'VE ORDERS TO ADOPT THE BEST PLAN FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE MISSION. MY SCHEME'S FOOLPROOF! I REFUSE TO SEE HOW YOU CAN BETTER IT!

SINCE YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY TOO PIG-HEADED TO LISTEN TO ANY IDEAS OTHER THAN YOUR OWN, YOU CAN CARRY ON WITH YOUR SUICIDAL SCHEME, AND I'LL CARRY ON WITH MINE!

DAN TURNED AND CLIMBED INTO HIS JEEP. LESOIS LET OUT THE CLUTCH PEDAL AND THE VEHICLE SHOT FORWARD.

HIS PLAN IS FOOLISH, M'SIEUR. THE BOCHES ARE TOO ALERT TODAY FOR SUCH A RUSE TO SUCCEED!



LEUTNANT SCHMIDT, GOADED BY THE FURY OF HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER, HAD SEARCHED ALL DAY DILIGENTLY BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS — UNTIL THAT MOMENT...

ACHTUNG,
HERR LEUTNANT!
A BRITISH
JEEP!

GOOD!
WE WILL
AMBUSH THE
DOGS!

THE GERMAN TRUCK SLID TO A HALT AND LEUTNANT SCHMIDT AND HIS MEN LEAPED TO THE GROUND...

TAKE COVER!
DON'T OPEN FIRE
UNTIL I GIVE
THE WORD!



THE JEEP WAS BOUNCING ALONG THE ROUGH FOREST TRACK WHEN, SUDDENLY, JACQUES GAVE AN EXCLAMATION...

BIRDS,
MONSIEUR.
SOMETHING HAS
FRIGHTENED
THEM!

LESOIS BRAKED GENTLY AND THE TWO MEN IN THE JEEP SLIPPED INTO THE BUSHES, MOVING CAREFULLY THROUGH THE BRACKEN AND TREES UNTIL THEY COULD SEE WHAT HAD DISTURBED THE BIRDS.

THEY'RE
WAITING FOR US,
ALL RIGHT. WHEN I
GIVE THE WORD, JACQUES,
TAKE THE ONE IN THE
TRUCK FIRST.

A
PLEASURE,
M' SIEUR!



THEN, WITH BLOOD-CURDLING YELLS,
DAN AND JACQUES ATTACKED.

DEATH
TO THE
BOCHES!

LET 'EM
HAVE IT!

HIMMEL!



BUT LEUTNANT SCHMIDT WAS A BATTLE-WISE CAMPAIGNER. WHEN HE SAW THAT HE AND HIS MEN WERE OUTWITTED, HE LAY STILL, FEIGNING DEATH...

WELL DONE, JACQUES! LET'S SEE IF THEY HAVE ANYTHING WORTH PICKING UP IN THE TRUCK!



DAN AND JACQUES PEERED INTO THE BACK OF THE TRUCK....

LOOK AT THESE FIELD GLASSES!

AND THE GUN! WE TAKE THEM—THESE DOGS HAVE NO MORE USE FOR THEM!





Chapter 4. SABOTAGE—OR SUICIDE!

AS DAN AND JACQUES WERE BEING LOCKED IN THE CELLS DEEP IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE CHATEAU, PETER PREPARED FOR HIS ATTACK.

GREGSON AND MACFEE—YOU'VE GOT TO CUT THE TELEPHONE CABLES TO THE CHATEAU—THAT IS VITAL! WHEN YOU'VE DONE THAT, FOLLOW US DOWN THE UNDERGROUND PASSAGE.

WHAT ABOUT LIEUTENANT EVANS, SIR? SHALL WE CONTACT HIM AGAIN?

TO BLAZES WITH LIEUTENANT EVANS!

AC4

LOUIS!
GET AS MANY
MEN AS YOU CAN TO
REPORT TO THE ENTRANCE
OF THE UNDERGROUND
PASSAGE AT TWENTY-
THREE HUNDRED
HOURS

THEY
WILL BE
THERE,
M'SIEUR.


FOUR HOURS LATER, BEFORE ENTERING
THE HIDDEN MOUTH OF THE UNDERGROUND
PASSAGE, PETER ISSUED LAST INSTRUCTIONS...

ARE YOU SURE
YOUR MEN
UNDERSTAND, LOUIS?
WHEN WE BREAK
INTO THE CHATEAU,
HAVE SIX MEN HOLD THE
TWO MOAT ENTRANCES.
THE REST GO IN AND
START SHOOTING!

IT IS ALL
ARRANGED,
M'SIEUR PIERRE.
WE ALL KNOW
OUR DUTIES!




THE TUNNEL WAS LONG AND WINDING... AND EVERY FEW HUNDRED YARDS IT WAS BLOCKED WHERE A PART OF THE ROOF HAD CAVED IN!



Three soldiers are in a dark, rocky tunnel. The soldier on the left is looking towards the other two. The soldier in the middle is looking down. The soldier on the right is holding a flashlight and looking up. Debris is visible on the ground.

HERE WE ARE UNDER THE GERMAN TANKS, M'SIEUR—THAT IS WHY THE ROOF HAS FALLEN!

MEANWHILE...




Three officers are in a room. One officer is sitting at a desk, looking up. Two other officers are standing, one of whom is speaking. There are papers and a book on the desk.

WELL, HERR MAJOR, I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE SOME INFORMATION FOR ME! SOMETHING IS BREWING—THE TELEPHONE LINE TO DIVISIONAL H.Q. HAS BEEN CUT!


I REGRET, HERR GENERAL, BUT THE PRISONERS WILL NOT TALK!

TOO IMPATIENT TO LEAVE THE MATTER IN HIS SECURITY OFFICER'S HANDS, THE GENERAL MADE HIS WAY DOWN TO THE DUNGEON CELL.




I FLATTER MYSELF THAT NO ONE HAS YET HELD OUT AGAINST ME! YOU MUST WATCH MY TECHNIQUE, KONIG!

THERE'S THE GENERAL. HE'S GOING INTO WHAT LOOKS LIKE A CELL!




I WONDER WHO THE POOR DEVILS OF PRISONERS ARE.

DAN AND JACQUES AWOKE FROM A NIGHTMARE OF PAIN AFTER THE TORTURES. THEIR TORMENTORS LOOKED COLDLY DOWN AT THEM...




LISTEN TO ME, ENGLISHMAN!
I GIVE YOU ONE MINUTE TO TALK
BEFORE I SHOOT
YOUR FRENCH
FRIEND!



DO NOT
TALK, MY
FRIEND!

QUIET,
YOU PIG!



COME NOW,
ENGLISHMAN,
SPEAK!

SPEAK,
YOU DOG!

DON'T
GIVE IN TO
THEM, MY
FRIEND!

IT WAS 23.50 — ZERO HOUR!

COME ON,
CHAPS, LET'S
GO!

EN
AVANT, MES
BRAVES!
FORWARD!



IT WAS THE WORK OF A FEW
SECONDS TO OPEN THE DOOR
OF THE CELL.

PUT YOUR
HANDS UP, ALL
OF YOU!

JACQUES
LESOIS! THIS
IS INCREDIBLE!

WE ARE
SAVED!



AFTER THE GERMANS HAD BEEN LOCKED IN THEIR OWN CELL, THE RAIDERS PREPARED FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE PLAN! ALL WAS STILL QUIET...

SORRY, PETER... I FOULED EVERYTHING UP BY GETTING CAPTURED! IT PREVENTED ME FROM WORKING MY PLAN, AND IT'S ALSO PUT THE TIN HAT ON YOURS! ALL THE TANK CREWS WERE PUT ON 'STAND-BY' AFTER OUR CAPTURE! THERE ARE ONLY ADMIN. OFFICERS AND A FEW GUARDS LEFT IN THE CHATEAU!



PETER LOOKED SHARPLY AT DAN. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD APOLOGISED AND ADMITTED A MISTAKE TO NOT ONLY PETER... BUT TO ANYONE! THEN ONE OF THE FRENCHMEN'S STENS RIPPED OUT A BURST OF LEAD...

THE GUARDS ARE ALERTED! WELL, IF THEY WANT A FIGHT... LET'S GIVE 'EM ONE!



WITHIN A FEW SECONDS, THE HALLS AND PASSAGES ECHOED TO THE CHATTERING OF AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE.



HEY, PETER!
HOW ABOUT
LETTING MY
PLAN COME
INTO EFFECT!

OKAY! DO
YOUR WORST!



AND THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE THAT PETER HAD AGREED UNHESITATINGLY TO ANY SUGGESTION PUT FORWARD BY DAN EVANS!

DAN OUTLINED HIS PLAN TO LOUIS...

TELL YOUR MEN TO
START AT THE SOUTH-
WEST CORNER OF THE
HEATH—AND DON'T
BE LONG!

LEAVE IT
TO ME,
M'SIEU!



THE TROOPS BIVOUACKED IN THE CHATEAU
GROUNDS WERE NOW THOROUGHLY ALERTED
BY THE SOUND OF SHOOTING FROM WITHIN
THE CHATEAU. THE OFFICERS ON DUTY
RALLIED THE MEN AND RAN TOWARDS THE
MAIN ENTRANCE....

COME ON!



BUT THE MAQUIS GUARDED THE GATE WELL!



A HAIL OF LEAD RIPPED INTO THE ENEMY RANKS!



... AND THE SURVIVING GERMANS TURNED IN PANIC BACK TO WHERE THE SINISTER SHAPES OF THE TIGER TANKS STOOD WAITING.



HOW GOES
IT, FERNAND?

THE RATS
HAVE RETREATED
BUT I THINK THEY
WILL USE THEIR
TANKS!

RIGHT!
STAND BACK!
I SHALL BLOW UP
THE BRIDGE!

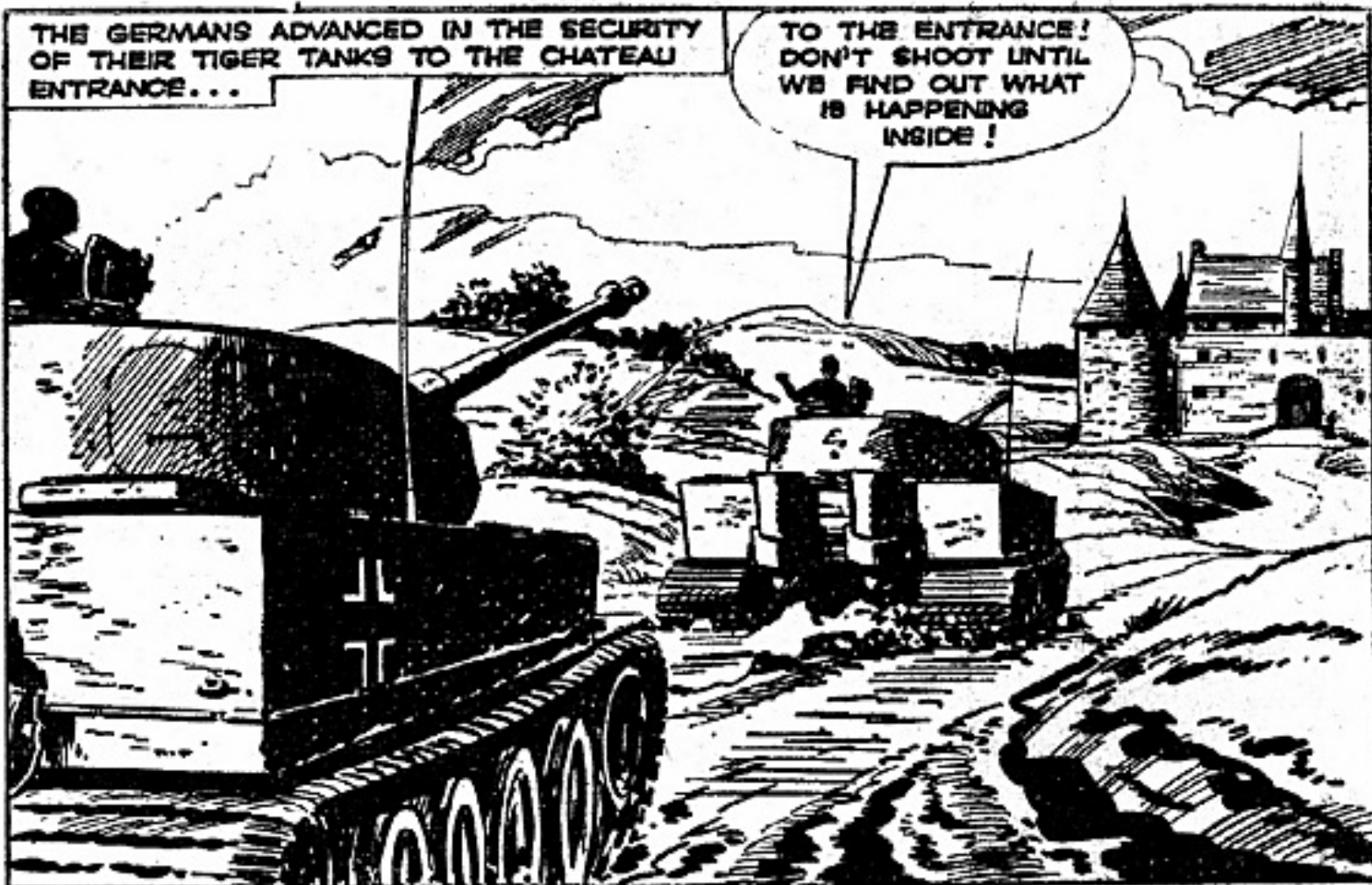
AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER....



HERE
THEY COME!
BUT WE
CANNOT STOP
THOSE MONSTERS!

THE GERMANS ADVANCED IN THE SECURITY OF THEIR TIGER TANKS TO THE CHATEAU ENTRANCE...

TO THE ENTRANCE!
DON'T SHOOT UNTIL
WE FIND OUT WHAT
IS HAPPENING
INSIDE!



FEVERISHLY, JACQUES PLACED THE FUSES UNDER THE BRIDGE...

HURRY!
THEY ARE
COMING,
JACQUES!

IT IS
READY!



THE CHARGES EXPLODED ALMOST BENEATH THE TRACKS OF THE LEADING TANK, DESTROYING ONE ENTRANCE TO THE CHATEAU.



WHILE THE BATTLE OF THE CHATEAU WAS AT ITS HEIGHT, GERMAN HIGH COMMAND WERE TRYING DESPERATELY TO CONTACT THEIR PANZER DIVISION THERE — FOR THE INVASION HAD BEGUN!

RIESLING!
SOMEONE SHALL
PAY FOR THIS! THE
ENEMY HAVE LANDED
AND WE ARE UNABLE
TO CALL ON OUR VITAL
RESERVES!

I HAVE
TRIED, HERR
GENERAL. THE
LINE MUST BE
OUT OF ORDER—
OR CUT!



LOUIS AND HIS MEN
WERE PUTTING DAN'S
PLAN INTO EFFECT...



THE FIRE LEAPT ACROSS THE DRY HEATHLAND,
PUSHING THICK CLOUDS OF CHOKING SMOKE
BEFORE IT! IT SWEEPED TOWARDS THE CHATEAU...



THE DENSE, BILLOWING SMOKE INCREASED THE PANIC ALREADY INFECTING THE BEWILDERED TANK CREWS...

TO THE TANKS!
THEY ARE GOING
TO BURN US OUT!

DON'T BE FOOLS!
THERE IS ONLY ONE
ROAD WHICH WE CAN
TAKE! IT WOULD
BE CHAOS TO
MOVE NOW! STAY
WHERE YOU ARE!

FROM A HIGH TOWER OF THE CHATEAU,
JACQUES AND PETER WATCHED THE RESULTS
OF DAN'S PLAN...

RIGHT, JACQUES,
THIS IS IT! TELL
EVERYONE TO GET
DOWN TO THE
BRIDGE ON THE EAST
SIDE. WE MUST
STOP THEIR
ESCAPE!

OUI, M'SIEUR—
TO THE BRIDGE!

BUT DAN HAD LONG SINCE REALIZED THE EFFECT THAT HIS FIRE PLAN WOULD HAVE! HE LAID CHARGES ON THE GIRDERS OF THE BRIDGE AND THEN SEARCHED HIS POCKETS FOR A LENGTH OF FUSE...

GREAT SCOTT!
I'VE USED THE LAST
OF THE FUSE!
THERE'S ONLY ONE
THING FOR IT...

DAN DARTED TO ONE SIDE OF THE BRIDGE AND FLUNG HIMSELF DOWN WITH STEN GUN TO HIS SHOULDER.

WELL,
HERE GOES!

PETER, JACQUES AND THE REMAINING FORCE OF THE ATTACKERS WERE JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE BRIDGE SHATTERED BY THE EXPLOSION.

THUNDER!
SOMEONE'S HAD
THE SENSE TO
BLOW UP THE
BRIDGE!

NOW
THE BOCHES
WILL BE
TRAPPED!

ONE BY ONE, THE GREAT TIGER
TANKS GROUND TO A HALT
ABOVE THE RAVINE. IT WAS A
NATURAL TANK TRAP!

THEY
WILL TURN
ABOUT—WE
MUST STOP
THEM.

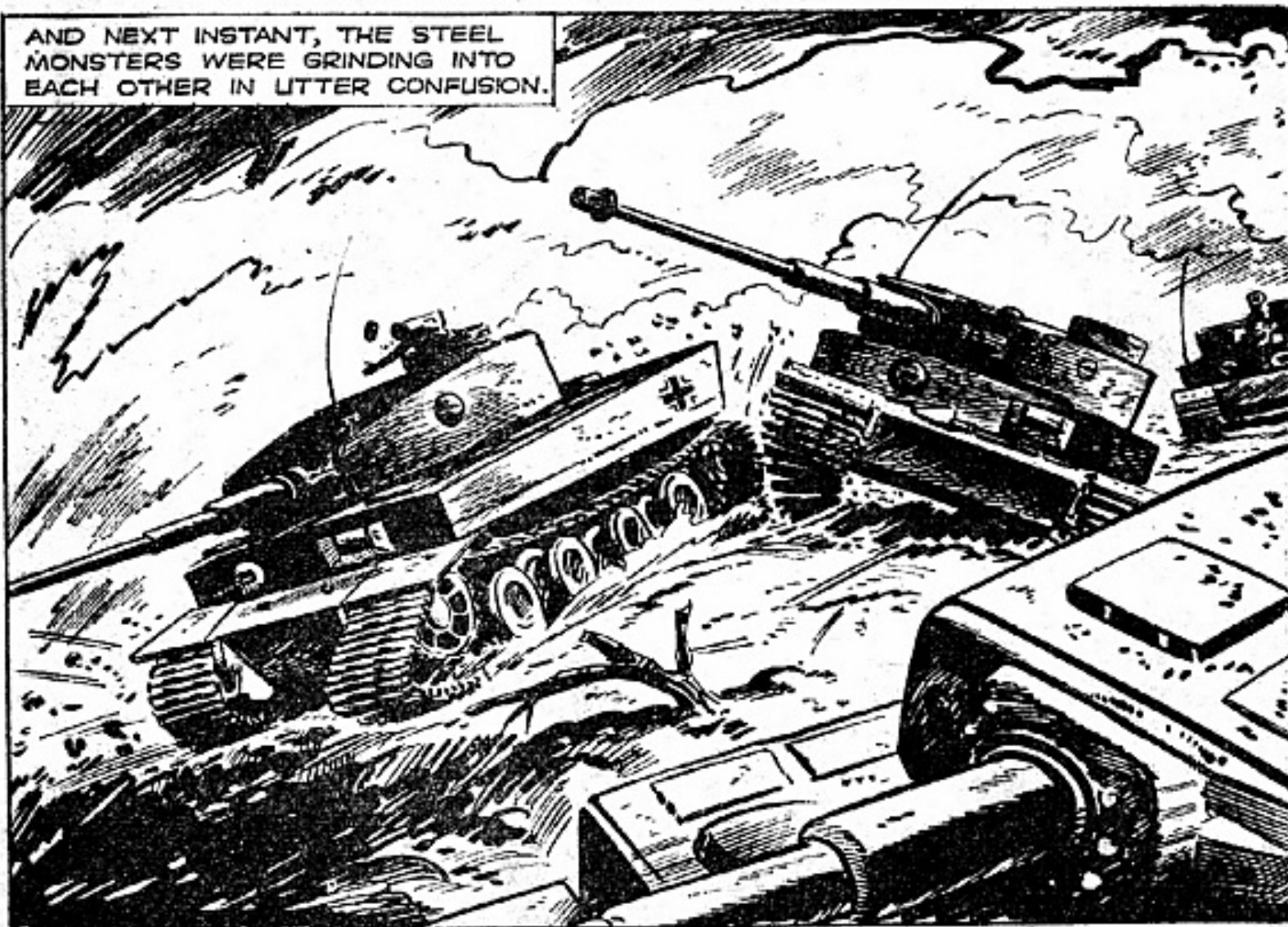
IT WILL NOT
BE NECESSARY! IN
A FEW MINUTES
YOU'RE GOING TO
SEE THE BIGGEST
TRAFFIC JAM OF
ALL TIME!

SOME OF THE GERMAN TANKS SUDDENLY BEGAN TO REVERSE. OTHERS TURNED CLUMSILY RIGHT OR LEFT INTO THE ACRID MANTLE OF THE BILLOWING SMOKE.

YOU ARE
RIGHT, M'SIEUR!
NOM DE NOM!
WHAT A
DEBACLE!



AND NEXT INSTANT, THE STEEL MONSTERS WERE GRINDING INTO EACH OTHER IN UTTER CONFUSION.



THEN PETER AND JACQUES CAME UPON DAN, LYING ON THE GROUND NEARBY, STILL DAZED BY THE EXPLOSION. THE TWO RIVALS GRINNED AT EACH OTHER!

HALLO, THERE, PETER! BY SOME INCREDIBLE LUCK, WE'VE DONE THE JOB! IF EVER AN OPERATION WAS BUNGLED FROM THE START, THIS WAS... BY BOTH OF US!

THE TROUBLE IS, WE'RE BOTH AS OBSTINATE AS EACH OTHER. ANYWAY, WE WORKED TOGETHER JUST NOW, AND TURNED FAILURE INTO SUCCESS!

AS PETER HELPED DAN AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF THEIR TRIUMPH, THEY EACH FELT THAT A NEW BOND OF COMRADESHIP HAD BEEN FORGED BETWEEN THEM.

COME ON, DAN! IT'S TIME WE STARTED BACK FOR OUR LINES.

I WILL FETCH YOUR JEEP! REMAIN THERE, I SHALL NOT BE LONG!

DAWN WAS BREAKING ON THAT FIRST MORNING OF THE INVASION, AS THE THE WOUNDED DAN WAS LIFTED INTO A JEEP.

YOU KNOW, FRIEND LOUIS! YOU AND JACQUES—YOU'VE DONE PRETTY WELL! WHAT'S MORE, YOU'VE DONE IT TOGETHER!

YOU ARE RIGHT, MON AMI! IT HAS TAKEN US NEARLY FIVE YEARS OF WAR TO FIND IT OUT! IS THAT NOT SO, JACQUES?

OUI, LOUIS, YOU ARE RIGHT! FROM NOW ON, WE FIGHT TOGETHER!


THE COMMANDO UNIT BADE FAREWELL TO THEIR BRAVE FRENCH ALLIES AND HEADED FOR THE INVASION BEACHES.

AU REVOIR!

BON VOYAGE, MES AMIS!



AS THE PARTY NEARED THE INVASION COAST, THE RUMBLE OF THE GUNS GREW LOUDER. SOON, THEY SAW THE VAST ARMADA THAT WAS BRINGING THE VANGUARD OF THE ALLIED ARMIES TO FREE EUROPE FROM THE NAZI YOKE.



WELL, WE'VE
MADE IT BACK IN
TIME FOR THE BIG
PARTY... BUT THERE'S
ONE PANZER DIVISION
OF TIGER TANKS
THAT'LL BE TOO LATE
FOR THE SHOW!

IT WAS ANOTHER EIGHTEEN MONTHS BEFORE CAPTAINS FALK AND EVANS RETURNED TO THEIR DERBYSHIRE VALES ON DEMOBILISATION LEAVE. THEY WORE MEDAL RIBBONS TO REMIND THEM OF A GREAT SUCCESS THEY HAD MADE TOGETHER... BUT AHEAD LOOMED EDALE TOP, TO REMIND THEM OF ONE OF THEIR FAILURES!

DAN, DO YOU REMEMBER WHY WE LEFT HATHERMOOR TO JOIN THE ARMY?

I'LL SAY I DO! BECAUSE WE BOASTED THAT WE COULD CLIMB EDALE TOP... AND WE FLOPPED BECAUSE WE ARGUED WITH EACH OTHER!

DO YOU KNOW, THAT WAS EXACTLY THREE YEARS AGO THIS WEEK! I STILL RECKON WE COULD HAVE DONE IT!

THEN WHY NOT TRY NOW... WITHOUT ANY ARGUMENTS!

THE TWO STOPPED THE TAXI, CHANGED INTO BATTLE DRESS AND BORROWED THE TOW ROPE FROM THE BOOT OF THE CAR. THEN THEY SET OFF ACROSS THE SNOW...



AND A LITTLE AFTER MID-DAY, THERE WAS SOME UNUSUAL EXCITEMENT OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE PUB.

WHAT'S UP, GEORGE?

THERE'S TWO BLOKES UP ON EDALE TOP... WAVING LIKE MAD! CAN'T SEE WHO THEY ARE! PITY!

WELL, BLOW ME! ALWAYS RECKONED IT WERE IMPOSSIBLE TO CLIMB THAT PEAK AT THIS TIME OF YEAR... SNOW AN' ALL!

LATER THAT EVENING, THE MYSTERY WAS SOLVED BY THE ARRIVAL OF TWO WEARY, BUT HAPPY YOUNG OFFICERS!

THERE YOU ARE! WE ALWAYS SAID EDALE TOP COULD BE CLIMBED IN FEBRUARY!

SORRY IT TOOK US THREE YEARS TO PROVE IT! HOW ABOUT A PARTY TO CELEBRATE, EH, GEORGE?

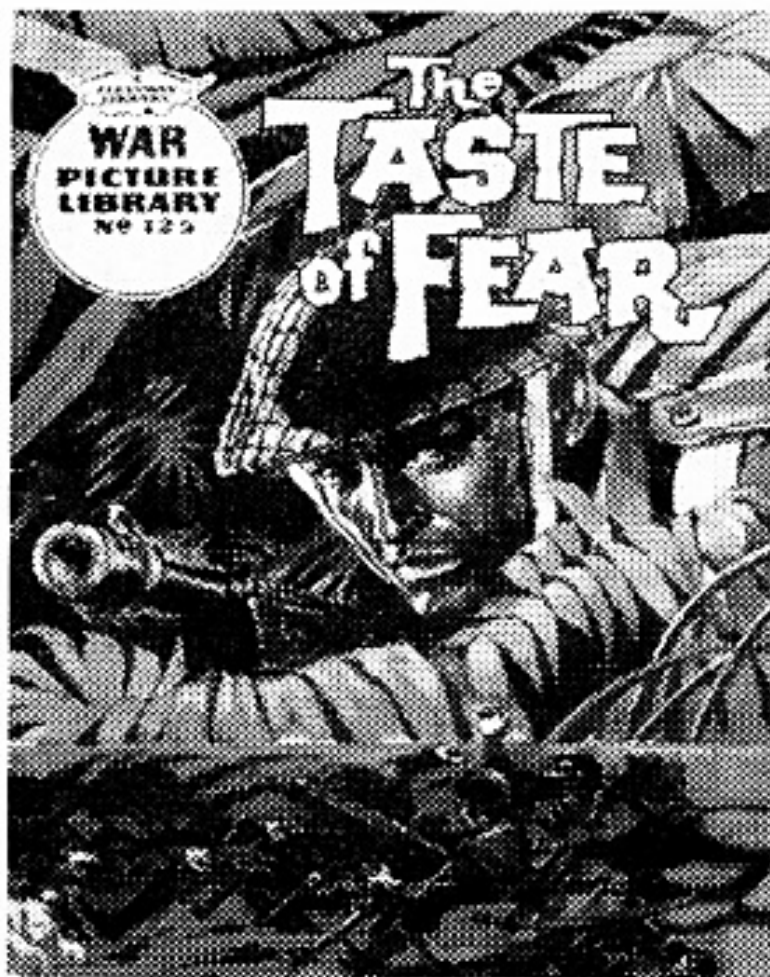
YOUNG PETER FALK AND DAN EVANS! BY GUM... GLAD TO SEE YOU, LADS. DON'T TELL US YOU'RE REAL FRIENDS AT LAST!

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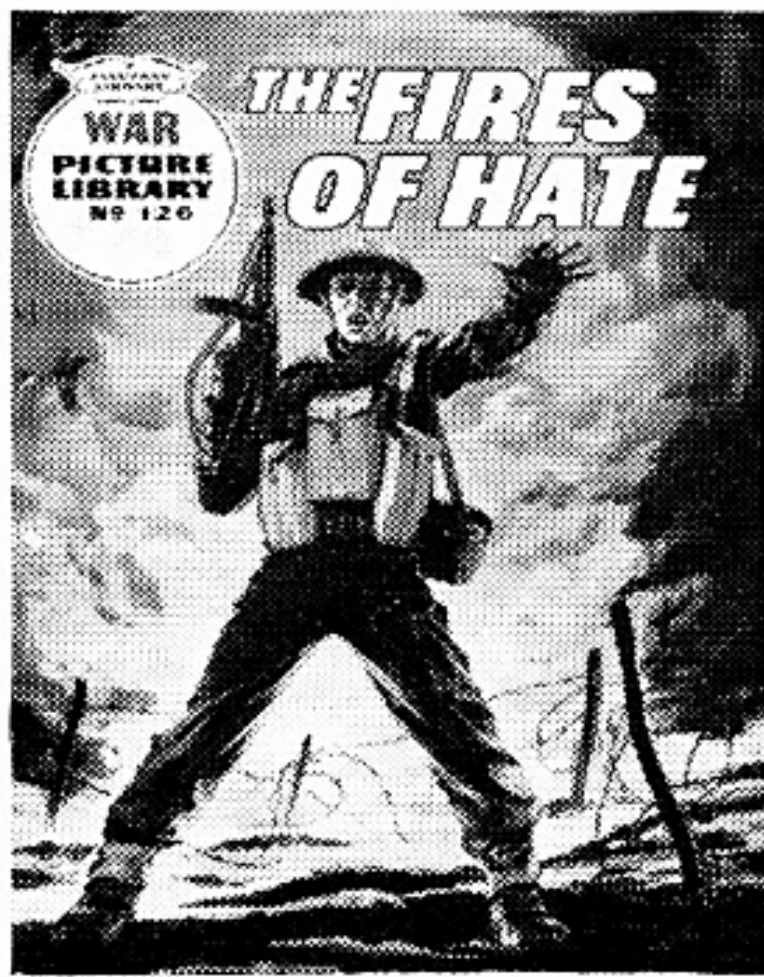
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